

# The Stress-Confidence Connection

If you take stock of your life and compare it to someone else's, does yours stack up the way that you'd like it to? It's true that there are some factors that do give people a leg up in life.

This can be a family background where the economic factors are better - or where the opportunities to climb the social or career ladder come far easier than they do for you. But there is something that lets anyone succeed in life, regardless of where they came from and the amazing start that they had.

It's confidence. This is the key to life's success - whether that success is in business or personal relationships. When you lack confidence, your success will be limited because it takes a certain amount of courage to go after what you really want in life.

## The Confidence-Success Connection

It's a widely known fact that confident people are often successful in whatever endeavor they strive to accomplish. When you have confidence, you have the self-assurance that you have the ability to take control of your situation or circumstances.

Without confidence, you won't fare as well in anything that you attempt to do. This is because a lack of confidence can alter the way that you make decisions. When you lack confidence, you can decide to handle your life in a way that will rob you of financial gains.

Without confidence, you lack the ability to interact and connect in social situations and competitions. It's a comparison thing. If you don't have the confidence that you should have, then when you compare yourself to others, or compete against others, you won't make the kind moves that you would make if you *did* have an abundance of confidence.

You won't make those moves because you won't truly believe that you can be a success in what you're trying to do. Many people have found success beyond their wildest dreams because they made bold moves driven by nothing more than the confidence they had.

You'll see those stories all the time - how people risked everything they owned or even their own safety because they believed that they could start a business or take a solo sailing trip around the world.

A lack of confidence keeps you at the starting line while confidence can have you taking the lead in any life race to win. Confidence gives you that something extra that makes you stand out in the crowd.

That makes the way that you communicate with others strong or weaker. This is why some people can take charge in a crowd. People aren't *born* leaders, they simply have the confidence to trust that they can handle what's going on.

They believe they have the intelligence, the ability and the means to accomplish what's before them. While anyone can develop confidence, there are two things that can impact whether or not you can have this confidence - those two things are stress and anxiety.

## **Anxiety and Stress Are Two Different Things**

Stress and anxiety are words that are often mixed up with one another, but they are different. This difference can help you succeed with what you want to do in life. Stress is strain that can be triggered by a situation or by an emotional upheaval.

Anxiety is worrying about something that might happen or fretting about the eventual outcome of an event. This can also be defined as nervousness. While there are many studies that tell you that you should avoid stress and anxiety as much as possible, you might not want to act on that advice - at least not when it comes to stress.

Because in many instances, stress can be a very helpful tool to help you get ahead, reach the goals you set and get what you want out of life. There are different types of anxiety.

Some types can be severe and require medication and require an individual be under a doctor's care. But those are not as common as trait anxiety. With this type of anxiety, it means that a person has the kind of personality that's geared toward causing an anxiety response.

It's a pattern of actions and thoughts that make the person react to what happens, or what they *think* will happen. When someone with trait anxiety has to deal with a situation that's stressful, he or she is going to respond by an increase of emotion.

That person would feel high anxiety, nervousness, fear, worry and their body would be tense. The level of anxiety can be different from one person to another. It all depends on how that person can deal with situations or stress that can cause the anxiety to flare.

If two people both have to deal with the exact same kind of stress, you'll have one person who will react with anxiety, while the other person won't. It just depends on the behavioral actions from past circumstances.

It's true that whenever stress occurs, it needs to be handled in some way. But how that stress gets handled is what can either enhance your life or be a weight on your shoulders.

The point of view that a person has when handling stress will color their perception of life. Some people can be more apt to see the worst in people and in life. This is because they've conditioned themselves with this reaction and thought patterns.

It's important that you learn how to condition your response to stress so that you make it work *for* you rather than *against* you. When you take control of stress rather than letting it take control of you, you can make it work for your benefit.

## **How Anxiety Levels Affect Your Ability to Handle Stress**

You can experience low anxiety or high anxiety and sometimes, it might fluctuate. You can have periods of your life where your anxiety level is much higher than it normally would be.

Sometimes anxiety is called long term stress, but this isn't the case. However, anxiety can be an emotional platform that stress lands on. The heavier the stress, the shakier the platform can become.

Since your emotional platform is how you go through life, you want to make sure that you can cope with whatever you have to deal with. If you have a higher anxiety level, it can cause you to have limited ability to cope.

In many cases, this can lead to an overreaction in dealing with situations. But it can also lead to a reaction that's not strong enough. With this kind of reaction, people tend to close off and find ways to escape from the stress so that they don't have to deal with whatever is going on.

If you have high anxiety, you'll find that you often struggle to cope with things that someone with low anxiety can handle with ease. For example, in someone with high anxiety, having a financial upheaval could cause a lot of fear and many sleepless nights.

In someone with low anxiety, it doesn't - because they have the self-assurance that they're going to be able to take care of whatever needs to be done. Another problem that you might find yourself facing when you have anxiety is a shift in the way that you think.

This shift is critical to how you handle both your personal and professional life. What happens is when you have high levels of anxiety, it can lead to negative thinking. This negative thinking is part of a cycle that also involves negative emotions.

The two are closely linked. If you're wondering what negative thinking has to do with confidence and your ability to get ahead in life and reach your goals, the answer is that it has everything to do with it.

When you're caught up in a cycle of negative thinking and negative emotions that stem from anxiety, it impacts your confidence. It affects it to the point that it starts to erode your beliefs, the self-assurance that you're as smart as or as capable as the next person of handling a circumstance, a job project, having a great relationship and so on.

When you have high anxiety, you'll believe fewer positive things about yourself and your ability because you'll think less of yourself and your ability and be focused on all of the drawbacks of a situation.

## **Tips on Lowering Anxiety Levels**

If you do have anxiety, it can be brought down to a level that works *to* your benefit rather than against you. There are two basic ways that you can lower your anxiety. The first way is to bring it down before you actually have to deal with anything.

The second way is to learn how to lower it in the midst of a situation where your level is rising. What you can do to lower anxiety levels that many people use is to concentrate on taking deep breaths.

Whatever is going on, when you feel your anxiety level starting to rise, take a time out. Even if it's for a few minutes, it will still help. Close your eyes and breathe in deeply through your nose.

Slowly let the breath go through your mouth. What this practice does is calm your thoughts. It has a physical effect on your body by calming your racing heart and releasing any jumpiness that you might feel.

You can also practice any form of meditation. Meditation, especially when it's done at the height of feeling anxious, can calm the mind. Some people choose to play a few minutes of a meditation CD that offers positive or affirming thoughts.

You can also choose a saying that helps center you and gives you a sense of peace. Aromatherapy has also been proven to be beneficial when it comes to releasing the tightness of anxiety within your body.

There are specific scents that are known to have positive effects on someone who's dealing with anxiety. Just like aromatherapy, music has been known to relieve anxiety. Music can also help alter negative thinking when you use positive, upbeat music to help you lower your anxiety levels.

Exercise can also help. Whenever you exercise, your body releases endorphins, the feel good hormones that can lift your mood and calm anxiety. Even just five minutes of exercise can restore calmness.

You may have heard the saying that laughter is the best medicine. There's a lot of truth behind that statement. Laughter is good for the body and it's especially good for dealing with anxiety.

When you need to lower your anxiety level, watch something funny on television or read a funny book. Get the anxiety out. You can release the anxiety by not holding onto the emotions that are causing your levels to go up or to stay up.

One way that you can lower your anxiety is by journaling. You can write out what you're feeling and why. Detail how it makes you feel and take note of any similar circumstances that you may have dealt with in the past.

It can help to look back over what you have gone through and see that you were able to deal with it and move on. Avoid things that trigger a higher anxiety level in you. For some people, this means avoiding things that are shocking or upsetting.

This might be the evening news, or people who always seem to have a doom and gloom outlook on life that ends up bringing you down. If you know a situation is going to make you feel anxious, if you can avoid putting yourself in that situation, then do so.

## **How to Wield Stress as a Great Tool When You Encounter It**

With all of the articles and books on combating stress, you might get the idea that any kind of stress was bad for you any time that you encounter it and that's simply not true. Stress can actually help you in many areas of your life.

When everything is running smoothly, the brain tends to think along one particular path and it will often return to the same way of thinking. But when you're stressed, it can stimulate your brain to think in a different direction.

When this happens, you can end up discovering a better way to handle a situation or a new solution to a problem. When you're stressed, if you're someone who has a lower level of anxiety, stress can give you a boost in the confidence department.

You'll feel more assured that you're capable and as a result, this will show up in your actions. Whenever you become stressed, it can cause you to act in ways that create opportunities for you that you may not normally have.

For example, if you're stressed about needing to earn more money and a job opens up, stress may be the tool that you can use to push yourself to try to land that job you want. Stress can override your inability to act if you struggle with wondering what you should or shouldn't do.

Stress can be a great motivator. It can help keep you sharp and can keep your mind on what you want to accomplish. When your life is going along fairly smoothly with minimal stress, you might not work as long or as hard to get what you want.

But when you encounter stress, it can give you an enthusiasm that drives you to reach outside the limitations that you normally stay within. You'll find that you'll put yourself out of your normal comfort zone and do more to achieve what you want than you do when you're not dealing with stress.

With stress, you can use it as a tool to see possibilities rather than impossibilities. It will cause you to concentrate and focus your energies on accomplishing tasks and handling things that you might not normally do.

So whenever you do experience stress, instead of allowing it to be an instant negative thing, ask yourself how you can make it work for your benefit. Look for the silver lining and grow your confidence that you'll be able to handle it.